

Check out pictures
at Arctic Warrior-
IBER

WORD ON THE STREET

By LUKE WAACK

What do you think of the Air Force Assistance Fund?

"It's needed, especially for young Airmen. They're not receiving the BAH like we are, the same COLA rates."

Air Force Staff Sgt. Jeremy Igleheart,
673d Force Support Squadron



"I think it's a really good program. It's a really big benefit to Airmen who are in need."

Air Force Staff Sgt. John Dorsett,
673d Force Support Squadron



"I think it's a great program; it helps out Airmen and people who are in need."

Airman 1st Class Samantha Frank,
673d Medical Operations Squadron



"I think it's good that it's there, like in case my mom needed something while my dad was deployed."

Ashley Noland,
Air Force family member



"I've been a (AFAF) project officer in the past. I've seen it help people."

Jim Cohen,
673d Contracting Squadron,
contract specialist and retired military

Editorial & Opinion

We take care of our own

Commentary by Luke Waack
JBER PAO

I got the heartbreaking news that my Grandma Betty, my mom's mom, had passed away while I was an Army private first class stationed at Fort Hood, Texas in 2002.

Her husband, my Grandpa Joe, had passed away nine months earlier while I was in Advanced Individual Training at Fort Meade, Md.

I didn't go to Grandpa's funeral because I thought it would have meant starting my AIT all over again, and I was just a few weeks from graduation.

Because I missed Grandpa's funeral, I doubly wanted to be there in Iowa with my family to honor the grandmother who I had many fond memories of.

My family didn't have the \$500 for a short-notice plane ticket from Austin, Texas, to Chicago, Ill., and neither did I, but there was another way I could borrow the money and

pay it back over time.

Army Emergency Relief offers short term no-interest loans to Soldiers with a hardship because thoughtful, caring men and women donate every year to help take care of their own.

The Air Force Assistance Fund drive begins March 7, and just like AER the AFAF helps troops and families in need.

While gathering this week's "Word on the Street," one Air Force staff sergeant I spoke with made mention of the fact that a single Airman living in the dorms doesn't receive a Basic Housing Allowance and Cost of Living Allowance rates are rank-based.

This simple fact of military life is what it is; some of us are older, with more experience in handling hardship and better pay, so it's up to us to help out those we work and serve next to.

A flat tire can leave a Soldier or an Airman flat broke, especially in

Alaska, where tire dealers almost always prefer to sell tires in sets, due to the high price of shipping.

So even the smallest donation to the AFAF or AER can help out the Airman in your flight or the Soldier in your company, when life happens and a family member dies or a car gives up the ghost.

The fund does a lot more than give grants to those who have a problem they can't solve on their own, especially in times of tremendous sorrow and grief.

Any Air Force active-duty service member, retiree, reservist, guard member and their dependents, including surviving spouses, can apply for assistance.

AFAF includes the Air Force Villages, the General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation, the Air Force Aid Society, and the Air Force Enlisted Village.

Contact your unit AFAF representative, or visit www.assistance-fund.org for more information.

Don't let snowslides bring you down

Commentary by Air Force Master Sgt. Joshua Franklin, 11th Air Force

According to www.ultimate-ski.com, an average of 28 people are killed by avalanches every year and in recent years fewer than half of the people caught in avalanches survive to be rescued.

Additionally, in a 2008 USA Today article, author Oren Dorell wrote, the death rate is increasing because people are venturing farther and farther into the back country and onto unstable snow surfaces.

So how can you stay safe while pursuing activities like snowmachining, skiing and snowboarding?

It helps to know where avalanches occur and avoid the areas.

It also helps to know the meanings of phrases such as angle of repose, cornice of snow, the risks of convex versus concave snow slopes and the importance of the disparity between the tensile and compressive strength of the snow in the area.

For now, let's focus on where to go for up-to-date information regarding avalanche risks in Alaska.

For the local area, the Chugach National Forest

Avalanche Information Center (www.cnfaic.org/advisories/current.php) posts current danger levels, as well as notices for open and closed trails.

This site also posts updates from the National Weather Service regarding popular outdoor activity areas such as the Glacier and Seward Districts.

All recent avalanches, human-triggered and natural, are listed at the bottom of the home page to warn readers of danger areas in the Anchorage area.

For other areas of Alaska, the Alaska Avalanche Information Center (www.alaskanow.org) is the portal for everything from snow observations to general avalanche education, just in case you are still thinking about the angle of repose.

The site also has a "snowmachine" tab with quick links to skills training courses, awareness training, and many of the snowmachine clubs in the state.

So if this winter and early spring find you out of doors, enjoying this wonderful part of the U.S., please remember avalanches are a real concern.

Stopping by one of these websites may very well be one of the most important parts of preparation you do before leaving home.

Tax centers open for business, refund preparation

Commentary by Charles Criss
673d Air Base Wing
Legal assistance attorney

Q: Where can I get my 2010 income tax returns prepared?

A: There are two locations on JBER where your tax returns can be prepared and electronically filed free of charge.

The JBER-Richardson Tax Center is located on the third floor of Building 600. The tax center on JBER-Elmendorf is on the first floor of the People Center next to the Military Personnel Facility Customer Service Center.

Q: When do the tax centers open?

A: The tax centers are open now and will remain open through the end of the tax filing season which closes April 18.

The JBER-Richardson Tax Center, open for walk-ins as well as appointments, is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Thursday from 1-8 p.m.

The JBER-Elmendorf Tax Center, open for appointments only, is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to noon.

If you wish to schedule an appointment, call JBER-Richardson at 384-1040 or JBER-Elmendorf at 552-9123.

Q: What is the Internal Revenue Service Web site?

A: The IRS website is www.irs.gov.

Q: What if I have questions? Whom may I call?

A: Questions regarding income tax preparation and filing may be addressed to either the JBER-Richardson Tax Center at 384-1040 or the JBER-Elmendorf Tax Center at 552-9123.

You may also review IRS Publication 3, Armed Forces' Tax Guide, available on the IRS Web site or order a free copy by calling 800-TAX-FORM (800) 829-3676.

Q: What things should I bring to the tax center?

A: To receive free tax assistance, bring the following to the tax center:

- Originals or copies of social security cards for you, your spouse and all dependents or a social security number verification let-

ter issued by the Social Security Administration.

- Valid photo identification.
- Birth dates for you, your spouse and dependents.
- Wage and earning statements (such as Forms W-2 and 1099R). Bring these forms from all employers. Time and resources do not allow us to print your W-2 from MyPay.
- Interest and dividend statements (Forms 1099). Bring these forms from all financial institutions.
- Property tax and mortgage interest statements (Form 1098). If you are a landlord, bring a copy of your 2009 tax return, plus the amount of 2010 rental income received and expenses paid.
- If 2010 was the first year you rented the property, please call the tax center for further information on what you need to provide.
- List of your medical expenses, interest paid, charitable contributions, and miscellaneous expenses (to itemize your deductions).
- A copy of last year's tax return (helps the volunteer prepare this year's tax return).
- To obtain the Child Care Credit, we need to know the total amount you paid for each child care provider during 2010 as well as their name, address and social security number or employer identification number. If your child care provider does not have a SSN or EIN you may not be able to electronically file.
- Amount of Economic Recovery Payment (if received) from Social Security or the Veterans Administration in 2010.
- Amount contributed to an Individual Retirement Account before April 18, 2011 and, if applicable, the amounts of any prior year's non-deductible contributions. (Bring your previous year's IRS Form 8606.)
- If you were a child care provider in 2010, bring all documentation to support the income you received as well as the expenses you incurred for the business.

All information must be in order and the amounts totaled by category. *Please note: Do not show up with a "shoe box" full of unorganized receipts.*

If you sold your residence in 2010, bring original purchase documents for the home sold, sales contract and receipts for improvements to the property.

If a home was previously rented, you must bring the most recent tax return on which a home appears as rental property. If your home had been a rental, an appointment will need to be made with the tax center.

If you sold stocks or mutual funds, bring documents to identify the purchase price, number of shares purchased, sales price and number of shares sold. In most cases, your broker will provide the required information.

If your spouse will not be present for the preparation of your taxes, you must have a Power of Attorney. Either a special POA or a general POA is acceptable provided it specifies "taxes."

Bring the original and a copy of the POA to our appointment. Your tax return will not be started without the POA.

There is, however, a special exception to using a POA for spouses in combat zones that permits the filing spouse to e-file a joint return with only a written statement setting forth that the other spouse is in a combat zone and is unable to sign.

If you want to have your return electronically filed and expect a refund, you will need to bring your bank account number and bank routing number.

These are generally found on your checks.

Deposit slips are not a reliable source for bank routing numbers. If necessary, you can obtain the information from the "MyPay" website under "Pay Changes" "Direct Deposit". Please print this information before coming to the tax center. We do not have the resources to look up this information for you.

Other relevant information about income and expenses. An example would be the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend.

Q: Where's my refund?

A: If it has been over three weeks since you electronically filed your income tax return, or over six weeks since you mailed it, you can check on your refund by clicking "Check on Your Refund" on the IRS Web site home page.

You will need to know your SSN, filing status and the exact amount of refund shown on your income tax return.

Call 384-1040 or 552-9123 for more information.



The *Arctic Warrior* is published by Wick Communications, a private firm in no way connected with the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or the Department of the Army, under exclusive written contract with the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Public Affairs Office.

This civilian enterprise newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. military services. Contents of the *Arctic Warrior* are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force or the Department of the Army. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by U.S. government, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Air Force, the Department of the Army, or Wick Communications of the products or services advertised.

**Alaskan Command/
11th Air Force
Commanding General**
Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins (USAF)

**U.S. Army Alaska
Commanding General**
Brig. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo (USA)

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson/
673d Air Base Wing Commander**
Col. Robert D. Evans (USAF)

**Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson/
673d Air Base Wing vice Commander**
Col. Timothy R. Prior (USA)

JBER Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Joseph Coslett (USAF)

JBER Deputy Public Affairs Officer
Bob Hall

Internal Information Chief
John Pennell

Arctic Warrior staff
Luke Waack - senior editor
David Bedard - community editor
Chris McCann
Air Force Staff Sgt.
Jeremy Larlee - sports editor
Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Garcia
Airman 1st Class Jack Sanders

Walker

From Page A-1

Eventually, he became valedictorian of his class and the No. 1 high school football recruit in the nation.

At the point in his life it was time to decide his future, Walker said he had always wanted to join the Marines, but his family wanted him close to home, so he decided to flip a coin, either the military or football, and his route took him through the football ranks.

Walker played college football at the University of Georgia.

At first he was told by the head coach, he didn't know if he could play because Walker came from one of the smallest high schools in Georgia.

This again brought out the Herschel Walker who was going to defy the odds and work through any pain to be the best of the best.

This Herschel Walker would do it yet again, becoming the only college player in NCAA history to finish in the top three for the Heisman Trophy each year he played, he received the Heisman during his junior year in 1982.

After spending some time in the U.S. Football League, which no longer exists, Walker joined the Dallas Cowboys and played for several other teams before retiring.

Walker said, seeking help after his retirement turned him around.



Herschel Walker, former NFL player, mixed martial arts fighter and business owner, talks with Sgt. Antwan Blackshear Tuesday, after a speech at the Richardson Theater. Walker visited Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson to share the story of his personal struggles with mental illness and to encourage troops to get help when they're hurting. (Photo by Airman 1st Class Christopher Gross/JBER PAO)

He said he's lost a lot, and his marriage has suffered, but his wife has stuck with him through the whole process.

He also said, he strongly feels that if he hadn't received help, he

would either be in prison or dead.

"There's no shame if you're suffering from anything to ask for help," Walker said as he ended his speech. "If you know of anyone who's suffering, try to help them,

because they don't see it clearly. I didn't see it clearly – if it weren't for (my wife) I wouldn't (have) gotten the help."

For people here, who want to talk or are in need of help they

can visit the Joint Venture DoD/VA Hospital, weekdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or call 580-2181 to talk or schedule an appointment.

To watch Walker's message, visit freedomcare.com.

Cobra Gold

From Page A-1

of schools, like the U.S. Army Ranger School.

"We had made arrangements to leave clues and even enemy survivors to provide the joint force the means to locate the next objective after each skirmish," said Capt. Benjamin Marquez, 3-509th, battalion intelligence officer.

The joint force walked eight kilometers through rugged terrain and dense vegetation before recovering all the role playing hostages. The short break in mission requirements allowed the two armies to rest up before the final event of the training exercise, a combined joint firing operation called a combined arms live fire exercise.

U.S. and Thai forces waged a massive assault on a fictional enemy border just a few short hours after the demanding events of the field training exercise. The joint force used U.S. Marine Corps missiles, fighter jets, and Thai artillery to pound the distant hillside which represented the border of the fictional



A cloud of smoke rises in Thailand during joint U.S.-Thai training. (Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Winstead/4-25th ABCT PAO)

hostile country blamed for the capture of hostages in the previous day's exercise.

For nearly 30 minutes the empty valley suffered the wrath of the two countries' firepower in a display of explosions and air dominance. Immediately afterward, a rush of Thai and U.S. paratroopers flooded in and took the area in a hail of live gunfire.

From the vantage point of the commanding generals high over the engagement area, the scene looked like a coordinated strike of ants overwhelming a battered and smoking enemy location.

The field training exercise was over. There was nothing left. As the Thai and U.S. troops returned to their camp for rest and

refit, soldiers from both armies smiled and slapped each other on the back, mimicking the motions of explosions and machine gun fires.

Despite the language barrier, it seemed the two forces had bridged the culture and the underlying message was clear to participants and observers, "Job well done."

Awards

From Page A-1

efforts in 2010, indicating the high quality of care at the facility.

Air Force Major George Hestilow, was recently recognized as the Air Force Research and Special Duty Lab Scientist of the Year for his work with the Air Force Blood Program.

"People are in good hands here," Hestilow said. "We have some incredible clinicians, technicians, and administrators here – and they rival anybody in any of the armed forces and the civilian world."

Now serving as the chief of Laboratory Services at the hospital, he directed blood support for earthquakes in Haiti and Chile, as well as the November 5, 2009, Fort Hood, Texas, shooting, led transfusion practices at 20 sites and was a key driver of fresh-blood initiatives in deployed environments.

Those are just a few achievements among many, including his work on helping the Air Force usher in a new \$55-million database endeavor to ease blood tracking

across the DoD system.

Air Force Master Sgt. Margaret Cooper, received the award for the Outstanding Biomedical Equipment Repair Senior Noncommissioned Officer for her work.

The section not only repairs everything from wheelchairs to magnetic resonance imaging machines, they worked closely with the Information Services flight to integrate the Essentris electronic medical records system throughout the facility.

"A lot of medical facilities use (Essentris) in some of their sections – we're a pilot program (in the military) for using it throughout the facility," Cooper said.

While it was a daunting task, it eases the workload for inpatient care, as many medical devices – such as heart monitors – can connect directly to the system.

"It pulls all the information directly into the patient's chart," Cooper said. "It takes away some of the manual charting and reduces the chance of errors."

Cooper's section also standardized equipment throughout the facility – using, for example, one kind of infusion pump to dispense intravenous fluid and medications.



Air Force Capt. (Dr.) Heath Wright, 673d Medical Group, won the 2010 American Academy of Pediatrics' Uniformed Services Section, Air Force Young Pediatrician of the Year. (Photo by Chris McCann/JBER PAO)

"Some medical technicians can work in different areas of the hospital," she said. "This way, they're familiar with the equipment no matter which section they're in."

The Biomedical Equipment section also does operational checks, making sure that the new equipment is up to manufacturer and military medical standards.

Cooper was up against about 10 other NCOs from across the Air Force for the award and credits the people she works with.

"We have an awesome group of technicians here," Cooper said. "I couldn't ask for any better people to work with. They're the ones that really get the job done."

"(The award) showcases that we have some of the best in the business here," she said. "It should bring comfort to anyone that comes to the facility."

The hospital also can boast the 2010 American Academy of Pediatrics' Uniformed Services Section honored Air Force Capt. Heath Wright, a native of Tucson, Ariz., as the Air Force Young Pediatrician of the Year for achievements not only as a pediatrician but for his community involvement.

"The quality of care here is really second to none," Wright said. "We're leaders in our peer group in any way that's measured."

Wright has seen all kinds of health issues in children – from a newborn only weeks ago that had to be taken to the intensive-care unit for a congenital heart defect to rheumatic conditions and cancer.

Wright has volunteered for three years with Saint Baldrick's Foundation, a children's cancer research group, and volunteers as a ski instructor.

"It's really encouraging (to get this award)," he said. "It's hard to get recognition in the medical field, and it's different from the deployment, frontline idea. And military health care has a stigma – but it's not justified. We provide good, solid care."

The Nutritional Medicine Flight took the Nutritional Medicine Team award for work with the hospital dining facilities, patient meals, as well as community work.

Also recognized were Air Force Master Sgt. Nathaniel Perry and Command Master Sgt. Lewis Dunlap as outstanding senior NCOs, and Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Walthall, the Outstanding Health Plans Management NCO.

The Information Services Flight was recognized as well, as the top Medical Information Services team. The flight runs the entire communications backbone

for the hospital, keeping everything in-house.

With the Essentris system and other specialized medical equipment, it's necessary to have specialized technicians who are trained in those areas, explained Senior Master Sgt. Samuel Hess.

They run separate servers for e-mail and Internet, phone lines, medical equipment, and also network with the Army and VA systems so providers can work on the different systems without major difficulties.

"Lots of our needs can't be supported by the base communications groups, because they're so specific," Hess said. "We're very localized to the medical community."

The hard work paid off for the Information Services Flight – and ultimately for everyone in the JBER community, who can take comfort in the knowledge that they're receiving some of the best care the DoD and VA have to offer.

"It's a great honor to see these individuals and teams recognized at the Air Force level," said 673d Medical Support Squadron commander Lt. Col. Andrea Vinyard. "Outstanding work is done by the men and women – active duty, contractors, and civilians – of the 673d Medical Group every day."



Senior Airman Joshua Henry, a 673d Medical Group bioequipment medical technician, repairs and maintains medical equipment at the Joint Venture DoD/VA Hospital on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photo by Chris McCann/JBER PAO)

Arctic Warrior, mixed martial arts fighter conquers first match

By Air Force Staff Sgt.
Joshua Garcia
JBER PAO

“Bap, bap.”
Punching mitts snapped back as Airman 1st Class Nojin “Ian” Park, 3rd Maintenance Operations Squadron, warmed up with his coach, prior to his first Mixed Martial Arts fight at the Anchorage Sullivan Arena, Feb. 17.

Park prepared his body for the Alaska Fighting Championship event, enduring months of extensive cardio and muscular training.

“I (trained) in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Muay Thai kickboxing, and MMA styles of fighting four times a week for two and a half months. Dieting was also very important,” Park said. “You have to stay committed to both, the hardest part of my training was not giving up.”

Park continued to warm up, performing boxing combinations, wrestling takedowns, and prepared himself physically and mentally for the fight.

“Feel your opponent out, test him with one of your kicks,” Luke Rambur, Gracie Barra Gym, advised. “If he can’t handle it rain down on him.”

Like every sport, in MMA a fighter must have a game plan in mind to beat the opposition.

During training, fighters must strengthen their weaknesses while finding ways to exploit their opponent’s weak points.

“I really focused on my Muay Thai kicks, as well as my striking and ‘ground and pound’ abilities,” Park said of his training regimen.

As Park sparred with his coach, two and a half months of intense training showed.

Each punch was crisp; each kick was consistent, with proper



Airman 1st Class Nojin Park, 3rd MOS, prepares to hit his opponent, David Russnac, during his first MMA fight at Sullivan Arena, Feb. 17.



Airman 1st Class Nojin “Ian” Park, 3rd Maintenance Operation Squadron, practices punching combinations prior to his first Mixed Martial Arts fight at the Anchorage Sullivan Arena, February 17. (Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Garcia/JBER PAO)

form.

Even at half strength, onlookers could see the power behind each of Park’s strikes.

“Yeah, he’s strong – dude is beastly,” said Joe Murphy, one of Park’s gym mates.

Before the match, the call for Park to head to arena came down and Park and his gym brethren left the locker room.

Anxiousness filled Park’s eyes as he waited near the ring for another fight to end. His coaching staff gave last-minute advice, as

his name was finally announced and he entered the cage.

“Hearing the crowd roar, and looking at the walkway, it felt like a dream,” Park said of the emotions he felt as he entered the cage for the first time. “It was a big adrenaline rush.”

Park took the energy from the crowd and put it to work in the cage.

True to the game plan, “bap, bap,” two swift jabs tested the distance of his opponent, David Russnac, followed by a Muay Thai-style kick to the leg. The kick buckled Russnac’s leg, and then Park swooped in for a takedown.

A few “ground and pound” punches and the match was over.

Forty-four seconds is all it took for Park to take his first victory in the AFC ring.

“It felt great,” Park said. “I trained very hard for the fight and reaped the benefits of it.”

During the post fight interview, Park thanked his gym, Gracie Barra, for the training that they provided him.

For MMA fighters, their home gym is just that – a home where they can grow in the sport.

“I feel very blessed to be a part

of the Gracie Barra family, Park said. “We really train hard as a team and our coaches pushed us beyond what we think we may be capable of, in and outside the gym.”

“My gym has helped direct me to a positive direction,” he said. “My coaches, Patrick Applegate and Ricky Shiver really pushed me to train and go to school. I just finished two Associates Degrees.”

When asked if he will do another MMA fight, Park’s answer was as quick as his jab, “definitely.”

Not everyone is built to be an MMA fighter; it takes a certain mentality and physicality to perform on the level of these disciplined fighters, Park said.

“Mixed Martial Arts is not for the weak-hearted,” Park said. “You have to have a different mindset when you train for MMA, because it’s real, you can really get hurt in this sport.”

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is full of Arctic Warriors. Some fly aircraft, others may pull triggers, and this Arctic Warrior pulls no punches; he throws them crisply, “bap, bap” and with precision.

Winning his debut AFC fight in forty-four seconds is proof of that.



Airman 1st Class Nojin Park, 3rd MOS, practices “ground and pound” technique with Joe Murphy, of Gracie Barra, prior to his debut match at the Anchorage Sullivan Arena, Feb. 17.

Briefs and Announcements

Children’s dental health

February is National Children’s Dental Health Month. The 673d Dental Squadron reminds parents their children can avoid cavities. Ensure children have a well-balanced diet, limit snacks, brush and floss each day and get regular dental check-ups.

Children and parents can meet the “Tooth Fairy” and see educational interactive demonstrations, fun activities, and take part in raffles and giveaways at the Arctic Oasis, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Dr. Ravi Zacharias

Dr. Ravi Zacharias, an international evangelical Christian apologist, will speak at the Talkeetna Theater at 1 p.m., March 4. The event is open to Department of Defense ID cardholders and their guests are invited.

Volunteers needed

Air Force volunteers are needed for Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command missions to Vietnam and Laos. Volunteers can have any Air Force Specialty Code.

The mission to Vietnam takes place May 10 to June 11. There will be two missions to Laos; April 18 to June 5 and June 13 to July 31.

All volunteers must be approved by their commander via signed memorandum to proceed on a 45 day TDY; have a fitness score of 75 or greater; possess a tourist or official passport that does not expire within six months of mission completion and be in the grade of E-5 through E-8.

Senior airmen can apply but

commanders must attest to the selected Airman’s professionalism. This mission is unit funded.

For more information call DSN 449-9721 or visit https://13af.ops.hickam.af.mil/sites/index.cfm?event=index&page_id=581&tab_id=782.

Tax offices

The U.S. Army Alaska Tax Center is open to provide tax preparation and advice to service members, retirees, family members and eligible members of the Reserve component through April 18.

The center is in Room 306, Building 600. Hours are Monday to Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. and Thursday, 1–8 p.m. For more information, call 384-1040.

The 673d Air Base Wing Tax Office is next to Customer Service on the first floor of Building 8517, in the People Center, and remains open through April 18.

Hours are Monday to Friday from 8 a.m.–2 p.m. Tax preparation is free, but limited to valid military ID card holders.

Customers should bring Social Security cards or a statement from the Social Security Administration bearing their Social Security number.

Thrift shops

The Thrift Shop, Building 724, Quartermaster Road, Door 8, is open Tuesday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m., Wednesday, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. and Thursday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m. The Thrift Shop is also open the first and third Saturday of each month, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

The Bargain Shop, 8515 Saville

Ave., is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Voting poster contest

Entries are now being accepted for the Federal Voting Assistance Program poster and slogan contest.

The contest is open to U.S. citizens worldwide, via *challenge.gov*. Contests should use ideas from *fvap.gov* to inspire members of the military, their families and U.S. citizens residing overseas to participate in elections while away from home. More information can be found at *fvap.gov* or <http://challenge.gov/dod/115-absentee-voting-slogan-contest>.

Winners will receive a trip to Washington D.C., to participate in special events and tours.

Defense logistics

The Defense Logistics Agency (formerly Document Automation Production Services) provides a variety of document services including programs, in-flight guides and training manuals.

The DLA office is located in Building 984 on Warehouse Street. For questions or document services call 384-2901.

Housing referral

Visit the Automated Housing Referral Network at www.AHRN.com (sponsored by the Department of Defense) to find housing at a current or upcoming Permanent Change of Station location.

AHRN.com listings include available community rentals, military housing, shared rentals, temporary lodging and military for sale by owner listings. Listings

include property descriptions, pictures, maps, links to local schools, and contact information.

If you would like to rent your home, post a “For Sale by Owner” listing, or are looking for another service member as a roommate in your current home, you may place an add free of charge on the site. Call 552-4439 for more information.

Firewood cutting permits

Firewood cutting permits are issued at JBER-Richardson, Building 658, in the basement, Monday to Friday 8–11 a.m. and at the JBER-Elmendorf Wildlife Education Center Building 8481 19th St., Monday to Thursday from noon until 4:15 p.m., and on Fridays, noon until 2:15 p.m.

Woodcutters must have a US-ARTRAK Pass to cut firewood on JBER-Richardson. For JBER-Elmendorf, you must have a military I.D., or be a DoD card holder. For more information call 384-3174, 552-0310 or e-mail alicia.bricker.ctr@elmendorf.af.mil.

Munitions storage

The 3rd Equipment Maintenance Squadron, Munitions Flight, will be closed March 2–11, to conduct a 100 percent closed-warehouse inventory.

Any munitions requirements during this time will be considered “emergency” and will require coordination through the respective group commander. For more information call Senior Master Sgt. William Mothersell at 552-2589 or Air Force Master Sgt. David Scarsella at 552-3119.

Spice briefings

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson invites family members to Spice (synthetic marijuana) briefings.

There will be a briefing March 28, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., in the JBER-Richardson Theater and March 29, from 10 a.m. to noon in the JBER-Elmendorf Theater.

EOSO scholarships

The Elmendorf Officers’ Spouses’ Organization has scholarships available for 2011 high school seniors who are dependents of active-duty or retired military members. The application deadline is March 31.

Visit www.elmendorfoso.com for more information.

AER scholarships

The Maj. Gen. James Ursano Scholarship Program was established in 1976 to help Army families with undergraduate college expenses for their dependent children.

The 2011-2012 scholarship application and requirement information are available at www.aerhq.org. Deadline for submissions is April 1.

The Stateside Spouse Education Assistance Program is designed to provide spouses of active-duty and retired Soldiers, and widows or widowers of Soldiers who died either on active duty or in a retired status, and reside in the U.S., with financial assistance in pursuing educational goals.

For more information, call 384-7478.

Flu news: prevent the spread of flu, wash hands frequently

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The peak of the flu season is in full effect and lasts through March and April.

For millions of people each year, the flu can bring a fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, fatigue, and miserable days spent in bed instead of at work or school.

However, you may not realize that more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications each year.

The flu can also be deadly.

Anyone can get the flu, but some people are at greater risk for serious flu-related complications like pneumonia that can lead to hospitalization and even death.

For those at greater risk for complications, getting the flu vaccine is especially important.

People at greater risk include:

- Children younger than 5 years old, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant women
- People with certain medical conditions like asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), or heart and lung disease
- People 65 years and older

The flu vaccine is safe, and recommended for everyone six months of age and older.

It is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu.



A map of U.S. flu activity, as of Feb. 12. Alaska is shown as having widespread reporting of flu activity. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention courtesy graphic)

Getting the flu vaccine each season can keep you from getting sick and keep you from spreading the flu to others.

Protect yourself and your community by getting vaccinated.

Other ways to prevent the spread of the flu include:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for 20 seconds
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub
- If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth – germs spread this way
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people

You may be asked to put on a facemask to protect others.

If you are sick with flu-like illness, you should stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities.

Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.

Take flu anti-viral drugs if your doctor prescribes them.

If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.

Antiviral drugs are different from antibiotics. They are prescription medicines and are not available over-the-counter.

Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

It’s very important antiviral drugs be used early (within the first two days of symptoms) to treat people who are very sick (such as those who are hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu symptoms and who are at increased risk of severe flu illness, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with certain chronic health conditions.

While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. You may be asked to put on a facemask to protect others.

For more information, you can contact the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Public Health Office at 551-4000 or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at (800) CDC-INFO (4636), or visit CDC on the web at www.cdc.gov/flu.

JBER preps for National Patient Safety Week

673d Medical Group
Press release

March 6-12 has been designated as National Patient Safety Week across the nation.

The 673d Medical Group has planned activities at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson DoD/VA Joint Venture Hospital, which focus on providing the safest possible care to you, our patients.

Below is a brief list of activities you may encounter during your next visit to the hospital – all aimed at ensuring your safety.

Patient identification:

Each time you receive any service at the hospital, our staff will verify your identification.

Staff members are required to use patient-specific information to identify you before you have an x-ray, receive medication, or have a lab test completed.

You may be asked to state your full name and date of birth or your identification card may be viewed.

Please don't be upset by these questions – it doesn't mean we don't know you, we just want to make sure that we confirm that the right patient gets the right test or treatment.

Remember, we only have your safety in mind.

Improve staff communication:

Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defines "communication" as: a process by which information is exchanged by individuals.

This happens in many different ways in the hospital.

During your appointment, you talk to your provider about your illness.

Your provider may speak to other providers about tests you may need or different medicines that can be prescribed.

If you are admitted to the hospital, your provider talks to you, your family and the nursing

staff about your plan of care. Sometimes your provider might "hand off" your care to another provider, such as a specialist.

When that happens, important information is shared between the people who provide your care.

The Department of Defense has developed a program to help hospital staff communicate more effectively.

This program is called "TeamSTEPPS," which stands for Team Strategies and Tools for Effective Performance and Patient Safety.

Different tools are presented that train staff how to share that important information about your health care.

Infection prevention:

Illnesses can potentially spread in hospitals if healthcare workers do not wash their hands or wear gloves.

Your medical facility has been involved in an ongoing hand hygiene campaign to make sure risk is minimized.

Nevertheless, it is okay to ask anyone who touches you if they have washed their hands or used an alcohol-based gel prior to touching you.

Automatic gel dispensers have been placed throughout the clinics and the hospital to make it convenient for use by our staff.

Don't be afraid to ask your providers to wash their hands before they provide your care.

The programs outlined above are only a few of the ways we are meeting and hopefully exceeding the 2011 National Patient Safety Goals.

Through hard work and dedication, the staff at the 673d MDG continues to provide the highest quality of care possible for our patients.

For more information, contact Carole Durant, Patient Safety Manager for the 673d MDG at 580-3086.

'Space-A' up, up and away

By Air Mobility Command
Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — Every day, around the world, hundreds of military and military-contracted commercial aircraft travel the world delivering troops and cargo.

These missions allow hundreds of thousands of military personnel, retirees, family members and other Department of Defense eligible travelers to fly at almost no cost, courtesy of the Space-Available travel program.

"Space-A" flights, also known as "military hops," are a unique benefit to U.S. service members, retirees and their families.

Under the DoD travel program, unused seats on U.S. military and military-contracted commercial aircraft are made available to non-duty passengers on a space-available basis (once official duty passengers and cargo have been accommodated).

Space-A travel is free with the exception of customs and head tax fees on these aircraft.

To sign up, eligible travelers must present a Department of Defense-issued ID card (for ages 10 and up) and appropriate travel authorization or, for active-duty personnel, current leave paperwork.

Eligible travelers can sign up for Space-A either in person at any passenger terminal, or in one of four remote ways: fax, e-mail, internet and regular mail.

Travelers must provide the sponsor's name and names of all traveling dependents, rank (active-duty members only), number of seats required, and desired destination.

"Self sign-up is a program that allows passengers to sign-up at a computer kiosk without waiting in line," said Cindy Rothenbach, AMC passenger policy branch. "Most locations provide self sign-up kiosk with easy-to-follow instructions for registration."

Rothenbach also said active-duty personnel must sign-up no earlier than the effective date of their approved leave.

If traveling to and from overseas areas, travelers must know the restrictions of any foreign country



A 732nd Air Mobility Squadron Airmen scans luggage for a Space Available traveler in this file photo at the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson AMC terminal. (Photo by Luke Waack/JBER PAO)

to be visited.

Status of Forces Agreement restrictions, U.S. State Department Travel Advisory guidelines and U.S. State Department passport and visa requirements are all necessary items to research prior to traveling abroad.

The individual country entry requirements and travel advisories may be found on <http://travel.state.gov>.

AMC aircraft often have open passenger seats available to fly eligible travelers across the U.S. as well as to and from other countries.

However, since missions can be re-routed, delayed, or cancelled for a variety of reasons (weather, maintenance issues or higher-priority missions), AMC officials advise travelers to be flexible with travel plans and to allow extra time for potential delays.

Officials also recommend travelers have sufficient personal funds to pay for commercial transportation to return to their residence or duty station if space-available transportation is not available.

According to AMC officials, today's military operations tempo underscores the importance of properly caring for our military service members and the families who support them.

Space-A travel and the DoD travel program are a reflection of

the trust and faith DoD officials place on men and women in uniform.

"We want service members, their families, military retirees and other eligible DoD-affiliated travelers to take advantage of this tremendous benefit and the opportunities Space-A travel offers," said Air Force Maj. Gen. Kenneth Merchant, AMC Director of Logistics. "We strongly recommend all eligible travelers check with their nearest passenger terminal for Space-A possibilities before making your travel arrangements. We've made recent improvements to make Space-A travel more customer-friendly and invite our passengers to tell us what they think of the service."

For more information, including AMC passenger terminal information, travel eligibility, and a downloadable Space-A traveler handbook, visit the AMC travel website at: www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/index.asp.

Passenger terminal locations and contact information can be found at <http://www.amc.af.mil/amctravel/amctravelcontacts.asp>.

Visit the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson AMC terminal online at 10364 18th Ave., JBER-Elmendorf.

Call 552-3781 for a passenger service agent.

Military Saves Week shows troops ways to profit

By Chris McCann
JBER PAO

On many military installations, it's easy to tell when a unit has returned from a deployment – new cars abound on the roads as cash-flush service members enjoy the fruits of their labor.

But many Soldiers and Airmen can get in over their heads with credit – and the overwhelmingly young demographic means many don't know or practice good financial strategies.

There's help available for service and family members on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

Army Community Services and the Air Force Military and Family Readiness Center can assist with everything from accessing credit reports to helping build nest eggs.

"The first thing is to put yourself in a good position financially," said Doug Armon, the ACS Financial Readiness Program Manager. "Have an emergency fund and build a nest egg. That's the number one issue I see. Often, service members are hit with an emergency and then turn to high-interest debt. Everyone needs a thousand or two thousand dollars set aside in case bad things happen, and there are many ways to make that savings happen."

The second step is twofold, Armon said. "The first part of that is to determine what your goals are, because your goals dictate where and how you're going to save or invest," Armon said. "If your goal is to buy a house or car, then a retirement savings account isn't a good choice – so that's of paramount importance. The second part is to consider that very few people stay in the military until retirement. Are you prepared for that transition out of the military? What are you doing for your retirement?"

In a nutshell, Armon said, everyone needs to eliminate debt and build savings in order to be on solid financial footing.

"We work day in and day out with service and family members, getting credit reports and assisting them with both of those issues," Armon said.

Many people have credit issues, some of which they may have long forgotten about,



Military programs like Army Community Service and the Air Force Military and Family Readiness Center can teach people how to save money. (Courtesy graphic)

but those issues can cause plenty of trouble – resulting in denial of security clearances, high interest rates on large purchases, and extra deposits needed for off-base housing.

All of the financial services personnel are certified financial planners and credit counselors, and offer all the same services as any credit counseling organization.

"The only thing we can't do is accept money," Armon explained. "You can't give us payments to give to creditors like you can with some agencies. But we can negotiate settlements with creditors and help you come up with a workable plan."

Credit agencies will often settle unsecured debt – the kind that has no collateral, like a vehicle – for 50 or 60 percent, Armon said.

"The only way they make money is if they get money from you – and they can't get it if you're not willing to pay it," he said.

In other words, if a service member is willing to work with the agency, they'll often compromise on the amount and clear the black mark off your credit report.

Spc. Sandra Ervin, a generator mechanic

with the Warrior Transition Unit, went to Armon for assistance with an old debt.

"I wasn't really comfortable with calling them, so he did the negotiation on the phone, Ervin said. "He made an offer, they accepted, and it was done in five minutes. Two days later I had paperwork from the company saying I was clear. It was a big relief; I'd gone to a briefing about it and tried doing it myself, but I was still frustrated, so I wanted to see how it was done in case I ever have to do it again."

The agencies can walk people through the entire process of debt repair, from getting an initial credit report and explaining what it all means, all the way to drafting final letters of closure.

Not only is the service as good as an outside firm, it's also free – which helps keep money in the service member's pocket.

Saving money can be easy in the military, Armon said.

"Many service members go to the buy-now, pay-later furniture stores, and end up paying three to four times as much as they would've paid in cash, he said. But they

could go to one of the thrift stores on the installation – and E-4s and below get furniture for free. It's used, but if you're looking for a couple of dressers for the kids, it's perfect. Absolutely take advantage of the things here – even changing your oil or tires at the Auto Hobby Shop saves you 25 or 30 dollars."

Another great way to save is the Commissary, Armon pointed out. Shoppers can save 30 to 40 percent on their grocery bills by taking advantage of an often overlooked benefit.

Taking honest stock of where money goes for a month is also a great tool, he said.

"Sometimes people don't realize that they're spending \$300 on cigarettes each month, because they buy by the pack," Armon said. "Or they don't add up the cost of eating lunch at a fast-food place every day. If you pay attention to where your money goes, those little things add up fast."

Saving can be done through the Thrift Savings Program or the Savings Deposit Program, or through any bank – although the military programs offer more interest and some added benefits such as tax-free status depending on whether a service member is deployed.

"The biggest point with savings is to put blocks in your way to accessing it," Armon said. "If you can access it online or with a debit card, there's too much temptation. Savings accounts should be restricted to face-to-face withdrawals to make sure you're thinking about it."

The military offers plenty of resources for service members and families to repair and build a strong financial foundation, and both ACS and M&FRC offer not only personal services but also briefings and classes about understanding leave and earnings statements, financial readiness before deployments, financial re-integration, and other military issues.

"I spent 22 years in the military," Armon said. "I have a degree in adult education and counseling, but I also learned through the school of hard knocks, and I've been on the other side of the desk, needing assistance. I know the things that can go wrong. We can help."

Aircrew flight equipment unit supports operations, wins big

By Airman 1st Class
Christopher Gross
JBER PAO

Pilots often receive all the glory for the missions they conquer, however if it wasn't for the crews who ensure the aircraft and pilot's gear are safely equipped, these missions wouldn't be possible.

The 517th Aircrew Flight Equipment unit here takes pride in inspecting the gear that allows crews to fly their everyday missions.

"We handle their safety gear; we're responsible for their lives. (If) something goes wrong with the aircraft they have to (rely on) our gear to help keep them alive," said Tech. Sgt. Michelle Davidson, NCO-in-charge for the National Guard side of the shop.

The flight consists of 16 Airmen – 14 active duty and two National Guard. Those with the guard fall under the 176th Operation Support Squadron.

Davidson said the shop cohesion is unbelievable and the Airmen work hand-in-hand to accomplish the mission.

Senior Airman Anthony Boustead said he finds his job to be rewarding because he knows the equipment that is on the aircraft and the equipment the pilots take with them is going to make them feel

safe, and could one day potentially save their lives.

Boustead and the other 15 Airmen are responsible for approximately 180 pilots from the 517th Airlift Squadron and 249th Airlift Squadron combined.

Airmen provide pre-flight and post-flight inspections on aircraft, installing or fixing any gear on board. Flotation devices, parachutes and oxygen equipment, like the quick don mask, are some of the gear they are responsible for.

This flight is also responsible for doing post-flight inspections on a pilot's gear; things like helmets, oxygen mask and communication checks.

If their gear is not used for some time, most of the equipment has a mandatory 30-day or 90-day inspection period.

It's important that the Airmen accomplish these tasks in a timely manner, which can many times be a demanding job, to keep their customers pleased, Davidson said.

Their hard work shows.

During this past year, whether individual or as a shop, the unit has pulled in approximately 20 different awards.

They were also the only aircrew flight equipment flight to receive an "Outstanding Team Award" during the 3rd Wing Unit Compliance Inspection in October.



Airman 1st Class Nicholas Sousa wears a mask as Airman 1st Class Patrick Bell, tests the mask as part of 517th Airlift Squadron support. (Photos by Steve White/JBER PAO)



A B O V E : Airman 1st Class Lisa von Poppenheim checks the integrity of Air Eye Respiratory Protection for 517th Airlift Squadron, C-17 crew members. **R I G H T :** Senior Airman Anthony Boustead pulls a parachute for inspection.



Air Force Maj. Mike Capozzi, 611th Operations Center, receives flight crew individual issue from Tech. Sgt. Ramiro Castillo, 517th Airlift Squadron at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.



Big Brothers, Big Sisters show children around base

ABOVE: Air Force Staff Sgt. Greg Massma, 673d Civil Engineer Squadron, shows children the inner components and capabilities of a fire truck during the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Big Brothers Big Sisters tour, Feb. 18. With help from volunteers, BBBS provides children from single-parent homes who grow up in poverty and cope with parental incarceration, with role models. BELOW RIGHT: Mathew Olson, a BBBS volunteer, helps his little brother, Jeriah Coleman, try on a flak jacket during a base tour. BELOW LEFT: Kahn, a 673d Security Forces military working dog, sniffs out a suspicious bag. (Photo by Senior Airman Laura Turner/JBER PAO)



Transportation company provides supplies

By Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes
101st Airborne Division

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan — Driving the roads here in Afghanistan is quite a different experience from Iraq, according to Sgt. 1st Class Kelvin Windham and Army Staff Sgt. Davis Miranda of the 109th Transportation Company, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade.

“There are a lot of unimproved roads here, and the elevation is different,” Windham said. “You’re literally going up the side of a mountain with a lot of the routes we traverse ... no guardrails or anything, so these drivers have to be very proficient in their skills. Any mistake out here is not forgivable.”

Yet their drivers constantly brave the dangerous and unforgiving terrain to ensure Soldiers located in remote combat outposts in Afghanistan’s Regional Command East and Regional Command North get the supplies they need to conduct their missions.



Spc. Michael Houck, a gunner with the 109th Transportation Company, checks the weapon on his turret as they conduct inspection on their vehicle. Houck’s company is part of the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 101st Sustainment Brigade, and has logged more than 600,000 miles in Afghanistan. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Pete Mayes/101st Airborne Division)

Since arriving in July 2010, drivers with 109th Trans., have logged more than 600,000 miles — more than any other truck company in the 17th CSSB.

Windham, the company truck master, said Soldiers must go

through six separate battle spaces to provide escort support and deliver much-needed supplies to various outposts.

The mission is anything but easy, he said.

Along with terrain, Afghanis-

tan weather conditions also figure prominently in transporting goods and services.

“Sometimes it can take us 18 hours or longer (due to weather) just to travel 100 miles,” Windham said. “Back in the states, 100 miles would take a little over one hour.”

Miranda, a squad leader with the 109th Trans., said driving the terrain in Afghanistan is like taking a step back in time.

“(It’s like) the roads are from the Biblical times,” he said.

“We’re struggling, trying to drive up these steep hills and the people who live on them (are) herding their animals and walking up them like it’s nothing,” Windham said.

Despite the challenges on their most recent mission, the company ensured remotely-stationed Soldiers got what they needed.

Miranda said the company continually trains on their equipment to ensure they can meet their mission’s goals.

“When we come back from a mission, it’s critical that we reset

and rehearse our battle drills and train on our equipment,” he said.

“We have been battle-tested out here, and the battle drills helped to minimize damage to our equipment and Soldiers,” Miranda continued. “It’s definitely paid off.”

Miranda gave credit to his Soldiers for their success.

“The caliber of Soldiers we have in this battalion is a blessing,” he said.

Windham said one of the things he’s witnessed as a truck master is the reaction of the Afghan people to the Soldiers.

“We get to travel through a lot of battles spaces, and many of the villagers are giving us the ‘thumbs-up,’” Windham said.

“Everyone here is not the enemy. I think it’s good that we get to see that,” he said.

(Editor’s note: the 17th CSSB is part of the 3rd Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, based at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. They are assigned to the 101st Sustainment Brigade during their deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.)

Army National Guard to update promotion board system

By Alaska Army National Guard
Capt. Amy B. Slinker
AANG PAO

CAMP DENALI — Alaska National Guard human resources staff members are looking forward to the day when they no longer will carry boxes of files, sort hundreds of folders and most of all prepare thousands of papers for promotion boards.

The National Guard Bureau is currently testing a new digital process to bring promotion boards into a new era. The Automated Board System will allow board members to use computers to review electronic files, instead of sorting through stacks of paper.

Sgt. Maj. Lillian Aukongak, personnel deputy chief of staff, said Alaska should implement the system during fiscal year 2012.

In the meantime, Alaska Guard members have been training on the system and preparing for the change. Aukongak explained that her staff will download a snapshot of each Soldier’s record from the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System the day of the board.

She stressed, it will continue to be extremely important for Soldiers to ensure their most updated information is in iPerms.

“Make sure you’re current on awards, Noncommissioned Officer Education System requirements, civilian education, the Army Physical Fitness Test, weapons qualification — all of the basic Soldier requirements,” Aukongak said. “They need to bring that documentation to their administrative clerks and have it scanned into their iPERMS record. Soldiers should not be passive; don’t expect somebody else to look out for your career.”

Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Hollingsworth, senior human resources sergeant, echoed Aukongak’s comments.

“If you reach a milestone, make it known. With today’s technology — with Army Knowledge Online and iPERMS — there really is no excuse for someone to not have something in their file,” Hollingsworth said. “You have the ability to sit at your home in your pajamas and check your own iPerms.

Most people who have home printers now have scanners, and you can scan any missing documents from home, right to your unit clerk.”

Sgt. Nick Power is a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 49th Missile Defense Battalion at Fort Greely.

His rank is tied to his full time position

there, so he continuously strives to keep his promotion points high to be competitive when a staff sergeant position does become available in the future.

“I’ve been doing correspondence courses and right now I’m taking two college courses online,” Power said. “I try to maintain PT, I went to the range recently, and I’m maxed on awards and resident courses. I’m trying to get that edge and be above the rest.”

Power said he wasn’t always as actively engaged with managing his promotion points, not because he didn’t want to put forth the effort, but because he was a junior Soldier who was unaware of how the promotion system worked.

“When I first joined the Guard, I would receive the NGB 4100 form in the mail but didn’t understand the concept behind it,” Power said. “Leaders need to make sure junior Soldiers understand how to manage their career; especially specialists because they’re not in the NCO professional development sessions.”

Hollingsworth explained that the system for senior noncommissioned officer promotions will be focused on a model NGB is calling the ‘Whole Soldier Concept.’

The board will look at an overall picture

of a Soldier’s career, including job performance, leadership, potential, dedication and attitude, Army Physical Fitness Test, height and weight, Department of Army photo, experience and assignment history, professional development, military and civilian education, awards, honors and discipline.

The scoring system will be more clearly defined as well. Scoring will go from a 1000-point system to a six-point system, according to Hollingsworth.

“Right now the system is very ambiguous,” Hollingsworth said. “With this new system, before anyone gets on a computer, the board members will determine what quantifies each score from one through six.”

Aukongak emphasized, the current system is still in place today. When the new system takes effect, the changes are specifically within the board process, she said.

“Nothing is really changing in terms of how Soldiers get promoted. All of the basic requirements as far as the Soldier is concerned stays the same,”

Aukongak said. “They need to show initiative to complete those requirements and make sure the documentation is in their iPerms.”



Army National Guard claims JBER basketball championship, Page B-10.

ARCTIC WARRIOR COMMUNITY

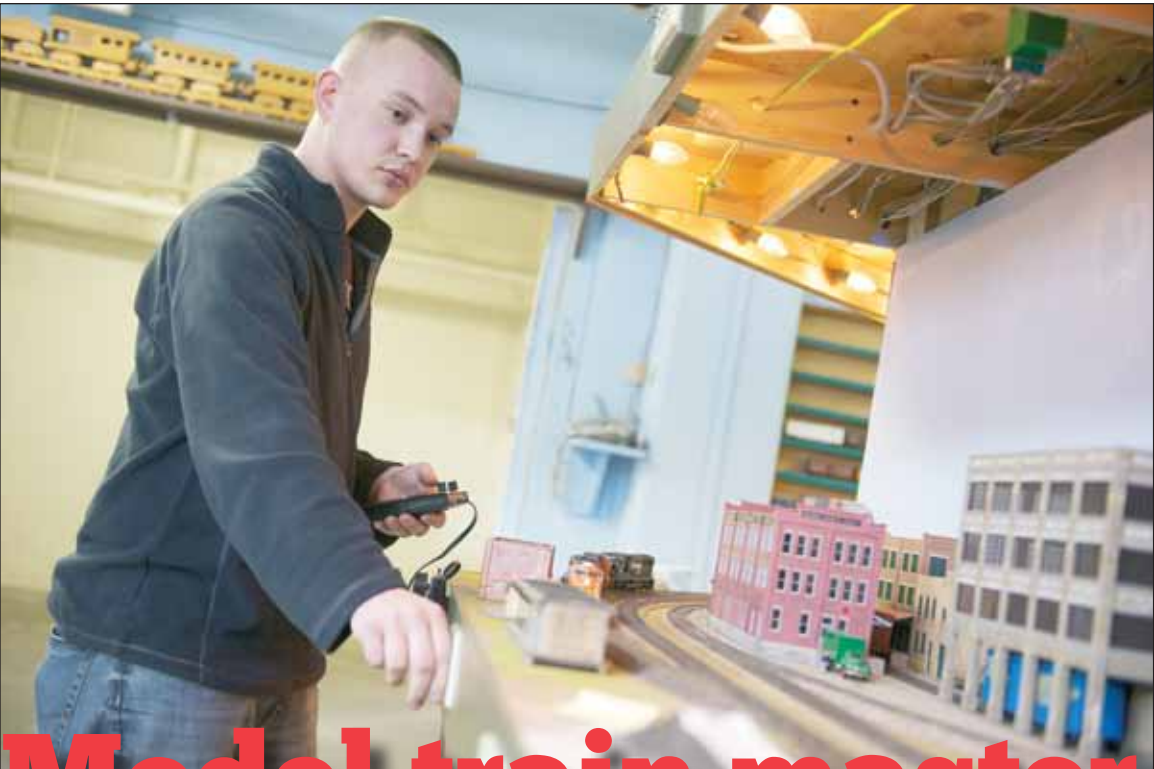
www.jber.af.mil/news



Get out and enjoy activities like seeing the Alaska Aces, Page B-2

Volume 2, No. 8

February 25, 2011



Model train master

Arctic Warrior passes time as a member of the new generation of model railroad engineers

By David Bedard
JBER PAO

Airman 1st Class Jonathan Schumacher, 381st Intelligence Squadron, worked with the hands of a surgeon, Saturday, on a 1-to-87 H0-scale model train engine.

Seated at the Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers' workbench at Matanuska Hall, Schumacher consulted with fellow club members on how best to repair a truck – the bogey assembly housing the miniature train's wheels – before stepping over to a rail yard layout to test his repairs.

Looking like Jack Black as the titular character in "Gulliver's Travels," the 24-year-old Schumacher is an odd sight among MSMRE members who are mostly retired.

The Sandwich, Ill. native said he developed an interest in trains through the influence of his grandfather.

"When I was young, my grandpa and I always went and watched trains," Schumacher recalled. "We started buying model trains here and there and it just started growing and growing, and it's been a fascination ever since. It's a good hobby to dump money into."

The client systems apprentice said a fondness for model trains wasn't the only thing he inherited from his grandfather, who served in the Air Force.

After graduating from high school and working at a warehouse for a few years, Schumacher said his interest in military aviation and a hankering to see the world let him the country's air service.

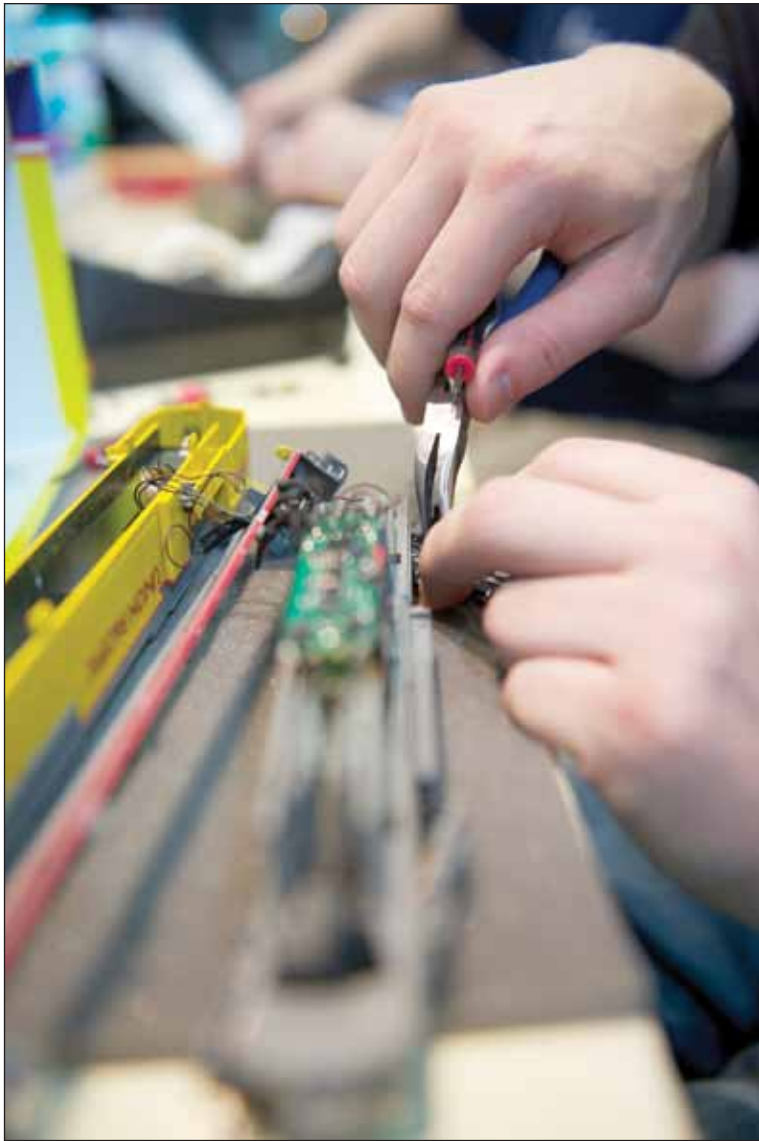
"I figured I would try something new, get the experience, get out there and see what's going on," he said. "I've always had an interest in planes even though I don't fly."

While attending technical school, the Airman said he made some inquiries concerning his as-

signment to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

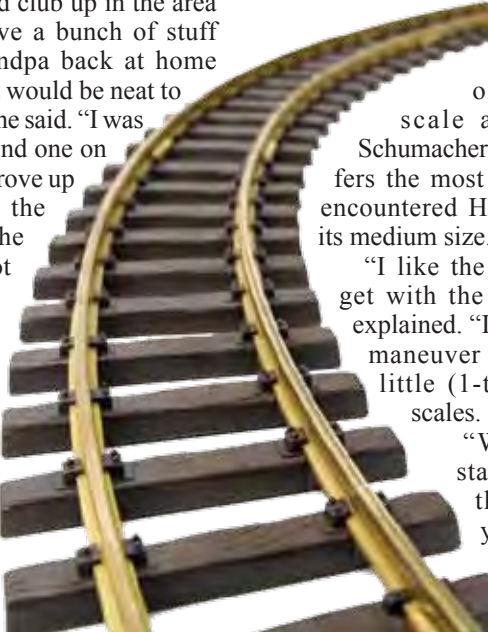
"When I was at Keesler (Air Force Base) for tech school and I found out I was coming to (JBER), I was wondering if they had a model railroad club up in the area because I have a bunch of stuff with my grandpa back at home and thought it would be neat to check it out," he said. "I was surprised to find one on base when I drove up here through the Alcan, and the first day I got here – it was a Saturday – I came here first before I went to the Squadron and checked this place out."

Among an almost



ABOVE: Airman 1st Class Jonathan Schumacher, 381st Intelligence Squadron, works meticulously to repair a model train engine's truck, Saturday, at Matanuska Hall. (Photos by David Bedard/JBER PAO)

ABOVE LEFT: Airman 1st Class Jonathan Schumacher, tests his handiwork using the Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers' Matanuska Hall H0-scale model train layout.



tribal culture of differing scale adherents,

Schumacher said he prefers the most commonly encountered H0-scale for its medium size.

"I like the detail you get with the scale," he explained. "It's easier to maneuver than these little (1-to-148) N-scales."

"When you start working the details, you can really do some precision

stuff with it that you can't do with smaller scales, like the trucks and side frames."

Though the Airman said he does spend time in digital-age pursuits like playing his game console or maneuvering RC cars, he said he especially likes to duck cold weather by working on trains.

"It's a good way to spend my time," Schumacher said. "I could be going out and spending my money on other stuff like drinking or doing something ridiculous, but I'm working on trains and socializing with the people here."

"A lot of them are retired military and you get their experience and hear a lot of their stories," he continued. "So that's fun."



For the troops

Movie star and comedian Eddie Griffin met with military members and their spouses at the Arctic Chill, Feb. 19, prior to his stand up comedy performance in Anchorage later in the evening. During the meet and greet Griffin signed autographs, took photos and delivered a short stand up act to everybody present. A prior member of the United States Navy, Griffin thanked the service members for what they do assured them that people do care about the troops. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Joshua Garcia/JBER PAO)

Community happenings

FRIDAY
Free movie night
The Little Rascals will be played at the Arctic Oasis Community Center at 6 p.m.
See page B-4 for more details.

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
Stuart Little
The Alaska Theater of Youth presents Stuart Little as a musical production, Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 2 and 7 p.m., at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.
For more information, call 263-2787, or visit www.mylaskacenter.com.

FRIDAY—SUNDAY
Telepalooza
Alyeska Resort hosts the 8th annual Jeff Nissmann Memorial Telemark Festival, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. daily.
The event includes telemarking clinics, races, demonstrations, live music and other activities.
For more information, call 754-2111.

FRIDAY AND SUNDAY
Aces vs. Wranglers
The Alaska Aces hockey team takes on the Las Vegas Wranglers, 7:15 p.m. on Friday and 5:05 p.m. on Sunday at the Sullivan Arena.
For more information, call 258-2237, or visit www.alaskaaces.com.

FRIDAY—MARCH 6
Fur Rendezvous
Dating back to the early 1900s, Anchorage Fur Rendezvous features performances, snowshoe softball, ice bowling, the Trappers Ball, and other time-honored wacky events in downtown Anchorage.
For more information, visit www.furrondy.net.

Chapel services

Catholic Mass
Sunday
9 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
10:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1
5 p.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
(Confession is available 30 minutes prior to Sunday Evening Mass)

Monday through Friday
11:40 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
11:30 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel Center
Thursday
11:30 a.m. – Hospital Chapel

Confession
Sunday
4:30 p.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Monday though Friday
Before/after 11:40 Mass – Soldiers’ Chapel

Protestant Sunday Services
Joint Liturgical Service
9 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 2
Protestant Celebration Service
9 a.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1
Collective Protestant Service
11 a.m. – Soldiers’ Chapel
Gospel Service
Noon – Elmendorf Chapel 1
Contemporary Protestant Service
5 p.m. – Elmendorf Chapel 1



Members from the 477th Fighter Group, Air Force Reserve, race against members from the 962nd Airborne Air Control Squadron, for the Commander's Cup during the outhouse race as part of the Fur Rendezvous events in downtown Anchorage Feb. 27, 2010. This year, Fur Rondy is from Friday–March 6. (Photo by Air Force Maj. Lisa Reaver/477th Fighter Group PAO)

SATURDAY
La Boheme
Experience a world-class troupe of artists in a deeply moving story set to the music of Puccini's most prolific opera , 8 p.m., at the Alaska Center for the Performing Arts.
For more information, call 263-2787, or visit www.mylaskacenter.com.

Seawolves vs. Nanooks
The University of Alaska Anchorage Seawolves hockey team takes on the University of Alaska Fairbanks, 7:07 p.m., at Sullivan Arena.
For more information, visit www.goseawolves.com.

Meet the World
Bridge Builders host this multicultural event, 11 a.m.–4 p.m., at the Anchorage Museum.
The cultural festival includes live music, dancing and hands-on activities.
For more information, call 929-9200, or visit www.anchagemuseum.org.

WEDNESDAY
Dr. Seuss' birthday
Join the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Community Library for story time on Dr. Seuss' birthday.
See Page B-3 for more details.

MARCH 4
Dr. Ravi Zacharias
Dr. Ravi Zacharias, an international evangelical Christian apologist, will speak at the Talkeetna Theater, 1 p.m.
The event is open to Department of Defense ID cardholders and their guests.

Free ski passes
Hillberg Ski Area offers free ski passes for dormitory and barracks residents.
See Page B-4 for more details.

MARCH 5
Vendors day
The Arctic Oasis hosts vendors noon–5 p.m.

See Page B-4 for more details.

ONGOING
Ice skating
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson recently opened a new outdoor ice skating rink for winter fun and fitness located adjacent to the Kashim Club.
The regulation ice hockey rink is lit and is professionally resurfaced twice weekly.
Outdoor recreation rents a variety of ice skates.
For more information, call 552-2023.

Machine Shop
The Automotive Skills Center recently opened their machine shop and hired a machinist.
See Page B-3 for more details.

Snowmachine safety
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Outdoor Recreation offers snowmachine safety courses Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.
See Page B-3 for more details.

Winter Train
Information Tickets and Travel offers Alaska Railroad tickets along with other local attractions.
See Page B-4 for more details.

Snowboarding 101
The Edge offers courses in snowboarding.
See Page B-3 for more details.

Outdoor happenings
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Outdoor Recreation hosts several events during the next month from an ice fishing tournament to a snowshoe geocaching class.
See Page B-4 for more details.

Dyea happenings
Dyea Ski Center rents winter fun equipment from snowboards to ice skates.
See Page B-3 for more details.

Free shotgun rentals
The Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Skeet and Trap Range

is offering free shotgun rentals during March for new shooters.
See Page B-3 for more details.

Swim lessons
The Elmendorf Fitness Center offers eight-session swim lessons, Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning March 15.
See Page B-4 for more details.

Kashim Karaoke
Karaoke for ages 18 and older is offered in the Kashim Lounge, 9 p.m.–2:30 a.m.
See page B-4 for more details.

Night of Discovery
Discovery is a religious education program of the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Chapel community and meets on Wednesdays 5:45 p.m.–7:30 p.m. through May 4.
Meals are provided at 5:45 p.m. with classes beginning at 6:30 p.m.
Bible-based classes for children K–6 are provided along with a nursery ministry for pre-school youth.
At the same time as Discovery, the Soldiers' Chapel hosts Club Beyond, an ecumenical youth ministry open to all junior and high school youth.
For more information, call 552-6480 or 552-0183.

Wired Cafe
The Wired Cafe is located at 7076 Fighter Dr., between Polaris and Yukla dormitories.
The cafe was built to serve Airmen who live in the dormitories with a home-away-from-home atmosphere.
The cafe has wireless Internet and programs throughout the week.
There are also free home-cooked meals Thursdays with dinner served at 6:30 p.m.
For information, call 552-4422.

Parent support program
The New Parent Support Program hosts several activities for families with young children.
In Jay Bear Play Group, parents meet other parents and enjoy a fun time with their children from

infants to school age.
The group meets Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in rooms 16 and 17, Building 337.
In Aqua Play, parents introduce their children, 6 months to school age, to water play and preparation for swimming.
The group meets every Tuesday from 10-11 a.m. at the Buckner Physical Fitness Center Pool.
In Craft Time, parents enjoy a weekly craft activity with their children, ages 2 to 5, followed by an interactive story time for parents and children.
The group meets every Thursday from 10-11:30 a.m. in Room 18, Building 337.
For more information, call NPSP at 580-5858.

Zoo Lights
The Alaska Zoo presents a new parade of animals for the winter while unveiling a new winter wonderland.
Walk the trails, 5–8 p.m. daily until March 5, decked with colorful displays of wrapped trees, canopied walkways and brightly lit animal displays to guide visitors through the zoo.
For more information, call 346-3242, or visit www.alaskazoo.org.

Planetarium shows
Embark on a journey to the stars.
Through 3-D graphics, surround sound and a dome screen, the Anchorage Museum's planetarium offers a fascinating way to learn about astronomy, the solar system and more.
For more information, call 929-9200, or visit www.anchagemuseum.org.

Native Art
The Anchorage Museum presents *(Re) Emergence: Contemporary Alaska Native Art and Design*, exhibiting nearly 50 art works created during the past 50 years by prominent Native artists.
For more information, call 929-9200, or visit www.anchagemuseum.org.

Births

FEB. 5
A daughter, Zoey Von Pritchard, was born 18 inches long and weighing 5 pounds, 4 ounces, at 2:46 p.m. to Senior Airman Michelle Pritchard and Senior Airman Alexander Pritchard, both of 3rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

A daughter, Magdalene Claudette Spannagel, was born 20 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 15 ounces, at 2:18 p.m. to Tennessee Spannagel and Sgt. David Spannagel, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

FEB. 6
A son, Kenneth Wayne George Jr., was born 21 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 9 ounces, at 3:21 a.m. to Donna George and retired Army Staff Sgt. Kenneth George Sr.

FEB. 7
A son, Khalil Keshawn Jones, was born 20 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 5 ounces, at 6:56 p.m. to Spc. Shanetra Jones and Spc. Angelo Jones, both of 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

A son, Urijah Giovani Lopez, was born 21 inches long and weighing 8 pounds, 6 ounces, at 11 p.m. to Victoria Lopez and Tech. Sgt. Joshua Lopez, 3rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

A son, Seth Thomas Miller, was born 20 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 2 ounces, at 4:47 a.m. to Jennifer Miller and Army 1st Lt. Scott Miller, 725th Brigade Support Battalion.

A son, Edbert Lam Thor, was born 20 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 10 ounces, at 5:56 p.m. to Rany Lam and Sgt. Muy Thor, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

FEB. 8
A daughter, Nevaeh Hope Jacobs, was born 20 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 14 ounces, at 11:48 a.m. to Maggie Bailey and Spc. James Jacobs, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

A son, Jovany Aiden Joshua Wilson, was born 6 pounds, 4 ounces, to Sgt. Elisha Wilson, 17th Combat Sustainment Support

Battalion, and Byron Wilson.

FEB. 16
A daughter, Trinity Joy Durham, was born 20.5 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 8 ounces, at 7:59 p.m. to Jessyca Durham and Senior Airman Randy Durham II, 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

A daughter, Samantha Rae Polasky, was born 20 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 6 ounces, at 6:32 p.m. to Janessa Polasky and Air Force Staff Sgt. Ray Polasky Jr., 3rd Operations Support Squadron.

A daughter, Lauren McKenzie Wells, was born 20 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 8 ounces, at 9:33 a.m. to Anndrea Wells and Sgt. Sylvester Wells, 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

FEB. 17
A daughter, Lori Ann Blyth, was born 19.5 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 7 ounces, at 4:03 p.m. to Keli Blyth and Army Capt. Ted Blyth, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

A son Todd Byron Markillie, was born 21 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 5

ounces, at 9:06 p.m. to Rene Markillie and Spc. Chuck Markillie, 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment (Airborne).

FEB. 18
A daughter, Annalise Tha-la Jackson, was born 19.5 inches long and weighing 8 pounds, 4 ounces, at 7:07 a.m. to Merchelle Jackson and Spc. Lawrence Jackson, 793rd Military Police Battalion.

FEB. 19
A daughter, Natalie Eleanor Itle, was born 21 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 12 ounces, at 3:09 a.m. to Stephanie Itle and Spc. Nathan Itle, 2nd Battalion, 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment.

A daughter, Colbie Rynn Silva, was born 20.5 inches long and weighing 6 pounds, 10 ounces, at 4:32 a.m. to Corynn Silva and Air Force Staff Sgt. Mark Silva, 703rd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron.

FEB. 21
A son, Vincenzo Giovanni Zeno, was born 21.25 inches long and weighing 7 pounds, 14 ounces, at 9:55 p.m. to Samantha Zeno and Sgt. Jonathan Zeno, 6th Engineer Battalion.



DoD officials strive to strengthen military families

By Elaine Wilson
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — From educational opportunities to spouse employment, Defense Department officials are expanding military family support programs to better meet families' current needs, as well as to empower them for the challenges that lie ahead, the DoD official who oversees military family programs said Feb. 17.

"It's not just about providing fish — it's teaching to fish as well," said Robert L. Gordon III, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy, to an audience of politicians, spouses and service organization leaders during the Congressional Military Family Caucus Kickoff in the U.S. Capitol building here.

The caucus' goal is to educate Congress members and staff about the unique challenges, including mental health, wounded warrior care, health care, education and disability, that service members and their families face.

The military community is diverse and vast, Gordon said, with more than 2 million service members, 1.59 million military-connected children and nearly 800,000 spouses.

"The question is: How do we look at that community and address their needs, but also empower them for the future?" he asked.

The nation is in an era of "fiscal austerity," Gordon acknowledged.

However, he added, families continue to have the same needs and concerns, including education, behavioral health support, employment and community reintegration.

Gordon called for an increase in DoD partnerships to bolster family support in the years ahead.

The department must continue to foster relationships with nonprofit and military spouse groups and the commercial and entertainment sectors, he added.

Leadership also is "absolutely key" when addressing the military community's most pressing issues and concerns, he said, but it will take more than just DoD leaders to do the job.

Government and nonprofit group leaders and senior military spouses, Gordon said, must be "focused like a laser beam on the issues and concerns of our military community."

Families have a plethora of support programs available to them, but leaders must ensure those programs are effective and



Tessly Kirchner, 1, rests in the arms of father Staff Sgt. Tyler Kirchner, 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment (Airborne), Feb. 24, 2010, during a 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division reunion at Buckner Physical Fitness Center. The Department of Defense is looking to strengthen support for families even as budgets shrink. (Photo by David Bedard/JBER PAO)

adequately address needs, he added.

Toward that end, Gordon touched on a few of the programs and initiatives the department is looking at to increase education and career opportunities.

DoD officials, for example, plan to conduct an education review to ensure a "world-class" education for military children. Of the 1.2 million military-connected children in schools, roughly 85,000 are in DoD schools, about 70,000 are in public schools on mili-

tary installations and the rest, Mr. Gordon noted, attend off-base public schools.

The 172-day review will look at science, technology and engineering, math, early child education and languages, he said, to ensure all 1.2 million military children are being adequately prepared for 21st-century demands.

For younger children, Gordon said the department is working to expand the number of childcare slots within communities.

The DoD has 923 child development centers with 200,000 young children needing care and a shortfall of about 30,000 slots, he said.

To alleviate the shortfall, Gordon said, DoD officials have partnered with 13 states to increase military family access to community-based, quality child care.

This focus on community care makes sense, he said, since roughly 70 percent of families live off base.

"We have to have partnerships where we provide those sorts of resources where the communities are," he said.

Officials also are focused on improving spouse employment opportunities, Gordon said.

Of the 800,000 military spouses, about 77 percent would like work, he said.

However, he acknowledged, spouses are hindered by frequent transitions and deployments.

Department officials are engaging in a spouse education and career opportunity initiative to alleviate some of those employment challenges, Gordon said.

The initiative includes expanding the Army Spouse Employment Program into the Military Spouse Employment Program so all spouses can benefit, he said. The Army's program helps connect spouses with opportunities in Fortune 500 and Fortune 100 companies.

These are just a few of the programs the department is working on, Mr. Gordon said, noting many others are outlined in the White House report, titled "Strengthening our Military Families: Meeting America's Commitment."

This report describes the sweeping interagency effort underway to better support military families.

Federal agencies, he added, have made nearly 50 commitments in terms of family support.

Moving ahead, Gordon said it will take a mix of innovation and creativity to meet military families' needs, while ensuring they're empowered "to be the best they can be."

Editor's note: For information concerning the Eagle Army Community Service Family Center, visit www.elmendorf-richardson.com/ACS. For information concerning the Willow Military and Family Readiness Center, visit www.elmendorf-richardson.com/mfrc.

Leaders outline improved health care services

By Lisa Daniels
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department has taken a number of recent steps to improve health care and family support services for military members and their families, the department’s two top leaders told a Senate panel Sunday.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee about several areas of improvement during a hearing about the department’s Fiscal Year 2012 budget.

Gates said he has made quick implementation of the shift to electronic medical records for service members and veterans one of his top priorities.

The issue is important enough, he said, he and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki met one-on-one two weeks ago to discuss how to push the change faster. They will meet again in March and follow up with a staff meeting in April on the issue, he said.

“I have found with these huge bureaucracies, whether it’s DoD or VA, that things don’t move very fast unless they get high-level attention,” he said. “We’re committed to getting fast progress on this. We’ve made a lot of progress, but it’s not fast enough as far as Secretary Shinseki and I are concerned.”

Officials also have stabilized programs, particularly in mental health and family support services, by removing them from the supplemental war funding budget to the base budget, Gates said.

In the past three years, he added, “we’ve



Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Navy Adm. Michael Mullen hold a press briefing on Department of Defense efficiencies that mark the next major step in the department. (Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Jerry Morrison)

moved virtually all of it to the base budget, so long after the war funding ends, we’ll still be able to sustain these programs.”

The Defense Department has improved the delivery of mental health services by hiring 6,000 mental health care workers since 2001, when the department had only about a thousand, Mullen said. “There have been extraordinary efforts to address this within the services,” he said, noting civilian health care also is short of mental

health practitioners.

Because of that and education and outreach campaigns, officials have a better understanding of problems like post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injuries, the chairman told the senators.

“Early on, there was a great deal of focus on spouses in terms of their stress, but there’s been an increasing awareness and understanding to address the whole family, including kids,” he said, noting that today’s

military children have had parents at war most of their lives.

Public awareness campaigns such as the one President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama announced last month about the health of military families also go a long way in helping service members and their families, Gates said.

The White House campaign “is a huge step forward in giving this visibility in a way we just haven’t had before,” he added.

Grandmother shares deployment lessons learned

Family Matters guest blogger, Debbie Nichols, is a military mom and grandma. Her daughter, Tech. Sgt. Erin Caldwell, is in the Air Force, and she has two grandchildren, Ivie and Bailey. Debbie cared for her grandchildren when her daughter, a single mom at the time, deployed to Afghanistan, and will continue to support them and her new son-in-law when her daughter deploys again in the coming year. In this blog, Debbie shares her top 10 lessons learned while caring for her grandchildren during her daughter’s deployment in Afghanistan. — Elaine Wilson, American Forces Press Service

By Debbie Nichols

It took me some time to think about what I had learned while caring for my grandchildren during my daughter’s deployment, because when you live through a challenging time, you don’t think about what you are learning from it. You are just trying to cope.

I remember there were days I wished I was not in that situation and just wanted to have my old life back. And there were days I cherished having my two granddaughters living with us.

Once I started making my top 10 list of lessons learned, I realized I could have made the list much

longer. But I focused on the knowledge gained that I felt other guardians would find the most useful.

Here is my top 10 list of lessons learned during a loved one’s deployment:

1. Don’t be afraid of deployment. I was, but learned how to adapt.

2. You may feel a sense of loss. I had a feeling of loss the first few weeks when our daughter deployed, but once she was able to communicate with me on the phone, that feeling of loss went away.

3. Conversations with your deployed loved one may be limited. No long conversations on the phone. At times when my daughter called I got so excited at hearing my daughter’s voice, I would forget what I wanted to tell her. I learned to keep a list of items near the phone so when she called, I wouldn’t forget.

4. Preparation is key. I created a new mindset that my role had changed and decided I was going to make the best of the situation.

5. Separation is tough. Deployment is not like when your child goes to their annual trainings, when you can just give them a call if you need to speak to them. You will be disconnected and it is going to take some time to adjust.

6. Raising children today is



Air Force Staff Sgt. April Jones, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron checks Army 1st Lt. Corey Bunch’s temperature, Jan. 4. Jones hails from Akron, Ohio, and is deployed from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Deployments require significant adjustments for families. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Keyonna Fennell)

very different from raising kids 30 years ago. Everything is different now. For example, I learned the term “stranger danger.” When I was raising my children I had them speak to everyone while they were growing up. My granddaughters informed me that it’s not OK for them to speak to strangers.

7. Children adapt quickly to change. They enjoyed my husband and me acting as their parents and they accepted our house rules very quickly.

8. Lean on your family for support. We all became stronger because we relied on one another. My husband and I, my daughter and my granddaughters all went full circle, supporting each other in what we had to do. I thought we were close before, but now, we truly understand each other.

9. It’s tough to adjust back to former roles. Once the deployment was over I then had to learn to be a grandma again, and this was an adjustment as well. I had no idea

the bonds I had formed with my granddaughters during that time would become so strong. My granddaughters were a part of my daily life and I had to adjust again when they left.

10. Be patient and understanding. When my daughter returned from her deployment she acted differently due to her deployment living conditions, even though she did not experience tragedy. Communication was even more important after she returned than during her deployment. It took my daughter many weeks just to get used to living in the United States again. It took her months to adjust back to being a full-time mom.

The most important lesson I learned from deployment, I think, is you make it what you want it to be.

During that time, I learned a lot about deployment, my family, my relationship with my husband, and even more about myself. I never thought that my daughter’s career would affect my career and my outlook of life. Now my desire is to help other military families.

I hope you don’t hesitate to share your deployment lessons learned.

Offer your lessons learned via the comment feature or contact Elaine Wilson at elaine.wilson@dma.mil.

Super Bowl champions touch down on USS Carl Vinson

By Petty Officer 2nd Class
Byron Linder
USS Carl Vinson PAO

ARABIAN SEA — Members of the 2011 National Football League Super Bowl Champion Green Bay Packers visited the Sailors of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17 on Feb. 16 during the ship’s maritime security operations in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility.

Safety Derrick Martin, offensive lineman Nick McDonald, line-backer Frank Zombo, defensive back Jarrett Bush and offensive lineman Daryn Colledge were joined by former Packers fullback William Henderson, head athletic trainer Pepper Burruss, equipment manager Gordon “Red” Batty and assistant equipment manager Tom Bakken.

The Super Bowl champions gathered to observe flight operations on the flight deck. Following air operations, the Packers hosted an autograph signing in the ship’s hangar bay. With Sailors lined up in two rows, the Packers made their entrance between them with high-fives on the way to the stage.

After a brief introduction, the players each tossed one signed football to the hundreds crowded around the stage. As the Sailors lined up at a table for autographs, a photo show highlighting the Packers’ season played on a screen.

The Packers signed football jerseys and flight deck jerseys, football helmets and flight deck cranials. Sailors also received the opportunity to try on champion-



Cmdr. Putnam Browne, executive officer of the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), greets the Green Bay Packers cornerback and safety, Jarret Bush, on the flight deck during a visit by the 2011 Super Bowl Champions. (Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Travis K. Mendoza/USS Carl Vinson PAO)

ship rings, pose for photos with the champions, and hold the coveted Vince Lombardi NFL trophy.

As Bush signed his appreciation to visit the deployed Sailors.

“To give the Sailors on this ship a smile and positive attitude, and a break from the hard grind warms my heart. To come here and experience what you do is an honor. Not many can do it, and not many choose to do it,” Bush said. “I appreciate any time we can bring

some happiness and joy, to help you forget the hard times of the work and sacrifice.”

Bush observed a parallel between the hard work required of an NFL player and a Sailor.

“No matter what job you do, if you’re the lowest man on the totem pole, work hard and stay focused. When you get the opportunity, it comes at the oddest time and you’ve got to be ready,” he said. “My dad was in military, and growing up I’ve seen it work firsthand.

I’ve seen others do it. It’s a blessing when you get that opportunity.”

“I have a couple of friends who were in the military, and when they came back, I wanted to see what was going on,” said Martin, signing a small Packers football. “I had to see it to believe it. We were told we could come over, and I was in. I appreciate seeing what you guys are doing out here.”

“We’re more in a position to thank you,” added Colledge, signing a Vinson T-shirt. “It’s a rare

opportunity to come to a ship like this. We still think of you, so we wanted to come out. It’s a rare thing to sacrifice like you do, and you’re a rare group of people.”

After the show’s conclusion, the players observed nighttime flights from Vinson’s “Vulture’s Row”, and an equipment demonstration from embarked Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel. The Packers held one more autograph signing at 8 p.m. for Sailors unable to make it to the earlier show to close out the first day.

Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Benjamin Loos, a Lincoln, Neb. native assigned to Weapons Department, was visibly excited to meet the team he had grown up watching.

“I grew up as Packers fan, and winning the Super Bowl meant a lot to me,” Loos said enthusiastically. “Them being here is a dream come true.”

Lt. Luke Koran, a Strike Fighter Squadron 22 pilot and Black River Falls, Wis. native, stood at the end of the line holding a small green Packers football.

“I’m from Wisconsin and a big fan. During the Super Bowl, I was on a beach detachment to Bahrain for a week, living in a tent. I woke up at 3 a.m. to watch the game,” said Koran. “Knowing they were going to be here when I got back to the ship was pretty cool. When I was a kid, I went to Lambeau Field and met a couple of the Packers, but this is the first time meeting a championship team. Having them come to the ship while we’re conducting combat operations is an amazing experience.”

Model Train Day opens miniature city to JBER



ABOVE: Kurt Rein, Lionel Collectors Club of America, tends to a model train, Saturday. Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson's Military Society of Model Railroad Engineers opened the doors of its Matanuska Hall model train layout during Saturday's open house. (Photos by David Bedard/ JBER PAO)



RIGHT: Mike Philo, MSMRE, inspects a truck on a tiny 1-to-148 scale train for wheel gauge.



Shadow boxer

Paul Credit, Elmendorf Aero Club Manager, explains the workings of a horizontally opposed "boxer" aircraft engine to Jeff Elsberg during Venture Point Hired program's Feb. 18 Job Shadow Day hosted at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photo by Steve White/JBER PAO)

At the movies

For recorded show and movie times, call 428-1200 or visit the Army and Air Force Exchange Services website at www.aafes.com. Movies are subject to change without notice. Admission: Adults \$4, children \$2. Information provided courtesy of AAFES.

Now playing



THE FIGHTER

Rated: PG-13 (mature thematic elements involving sexual content)
Playing: Tomorrow at 7 p.m.
Run time: 115 minutes
Starring: Mark Wahlberg, Christian Bale

Inspired by the true story of two brothers who, against all the odds, come together to train for a historic title bout that will unite their fractured family, redeem their past and at last, give their hard-luck town what it's been waiting for: Pride. The story unfolds on the gritty, blue-collar streets of Lowell, Mass, where Dicky is a former boxing hero who squandered his talents and threw away his shot at greatness.

THE DILEMMA

Rated: R (language throughout, drug content, some violence and sexuality)
Playing: Sunday, at 1 p.m.
Run time: 111 minutes
Starring: Vince Vaughn, Kevin James

Since college Ronny and Nick have been through thick and thin. Now partners in an auto design firm, the two pals are vying to land a dream project that would launch their company.



Coming attractions

Country Song

Rated: PG-13 (Thematic elements involving alcohol abuse and some sexual content)
Playing: March 5 at 7 p.m.
Run time: 117 minutes
Starring: Gwyneth Paltrow, Tim McGraw

Soon after a rising young singer-songwriter gets involved with a fallen, emotionally unstable country star, the pair embarks on a career resurrection tour helmed by her husband/manager and featuring a beauty-queen-turned-singer. Between concerts, romantic entanglements and old demons threaten to derail them all.



TRUE GRIT

Rated: PG-13 (intense sequences of western violence including disturbing)
Playing: March 6, at 1 p.m.
Run time: 110 minutes
Starring: Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon

Fourteen-year-old Mattie Ross's father has been shot in cold blood by the coward Tom Chaney, and she is determined to bring him to justice. Enlisting the help of a trigger-happy, drunken U.S. Marshal Rooster Cogburn, she sets out with him – over his objections – to hunt down Chaney. Her father's blood demands that she pursue the criminal into Indian territory and find him before a Texas Ranger named LeBoeuf catches him and brings him back to Texas for the murder of another man.



Alaska National Guard claims victory in JBER tournament



Members of the Alaska National Guard, in the white jerseys, celebrate in the Elmendorf Fitness Center after their win against A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion. In final game of intramural basketball season at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photos by Steve White/JBER PAO)

Alaska National Guard wins tournament for second year

By Airman 1st Class
Jack Sanders
JBER PAO

The basketball sat on the rim for what seemed like an eternity, the crowd roaring with excitement, before the orange globe slipped off into the hands of an Alaska National Guard player who ran the length of the court for the last shot of the game.

With 1.7 seconds left on the clock, John Gory, made the final basket to win the Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson basketball tournament 38 – 36.

The tournament was the result of the two individual tournaments on both Elmendorf and Richardson

sides of the installation, with the best teams facing off in a double-elimination tournament for the joint tournament trophy. This year the final teams were the Alaska National Guard and A Company 725th Brigade Support Battalion.

The tug-of-war game started off strong for the 725th. The team took an early lead of four points and held onto it throughout most of the first half of the game.

National Guard main ball-handler Donnie Millas led the game with the most steals. The National Guard team played a strong pass offense, keeping the handling out to the three-point line for most of the game with the occasional well-placed pick.

The 725th team worked well to dominate the paint under the basket and retrieve the most rebounds with their tallest player, Patrick Henderson, making more than half of the team's score. Henderson emphasized his height by dunking a basket in the second half.

Both teams enforced their right to claim the title, fighting point-for-point the entire game with steals, player picks and quick passing plays being traded between teams the whole game.

The turning point of the game for the 725th was loss of their main distance ball handler, Mike Ochea. Ochea took a hard fall after having his feet knocked out from under him on a lay-up.

The 725th team compensated for their lost player well, but the game came down to two missed foul shots in the last few seconds of the game and what seemed like an ill-fated final shot that hung onto the rim, ringing several times before falling out right into the hands of Millas.

The victory marks the second year in a row the National Guard has won.

"I the game was extremely exciting and both teams played really well and were well prepared," said William Bailey,

673d Force Support Squadron.

"The officiating was fair and accurate and it was a great showing for intramural sports and the joint effort between the Elmendorf and Richardson Fitness Centers."



Alaska National Guard member Donnie Millas takes a shot during the JBER basketball tournament final game. Alaska National Guard, played against A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion in the final game of intramural basketball season at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.



An Alaska National Guard, player passes the ball to his teammates. The National Guard played against A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion in the final game of intramural basketball season at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.



Alaska National Guard, in the white jerseys played against A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, in the final game of intramural basketball at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. (Photo illustration by Steve White/JBER PAO)



Alaska National Guard, in the white jerseys, player John Gory makes the final basket of the game played against A Company, 725th Brigade Support Battalion. The game was the final of the intramural basketball season at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.